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SUBJECT: TURKISH MEDIA REACTION
FRIDAY, MAY 15, 2009

IN TODAY'S PAPERS

Four Important Warnings from Europe

Islamist-oriented Zaman reports that a Turkey -EU summit will take place next week. The meeting will be held in Brussels with the participation of FM Davutoglu and State Minister & Chief Negotiator Egemen Bagis. The EU is expected to warn Turkey about the effects of the military on politics for the first time. The Union is also expected to warn Turkey about judicial independence, revival of the reform process and the opening of Turkish ports to Greek Cypriot vessels under the additional protocol. Mainstream Sabah says the EU prepared a position document in which there are praises for Turkish efforts for normalization process with Armenia. The document also says that Turkey needs a national strategy for compensating the losses of displaced people in the fight against terror; applauds the changes in article 301 of the penal code and welcomes Turkish decision to start Kurdish TV and Armenian radio broadcasts but adds that Turkey needs more measures to protect fully cultural and minority rights.

Editorial Commentary on Turkey-Armenia-Azerbaijan

Amebrin Zaman wrote in leftist Taraf: "PM Erdogan made a U turn and went to his old position by tying normalization process with Armenia with Nagorno Karabakh. It is hard to understand why Turkey has earlier made all the efforts for road map process with Armenia and even signed it. This reminds me of Turkish government's false promises on the eve of March 1 parliamentary motion [allowing American troops to Iraq thru Turkey] as we had to say 'sorry' in the end. There is no way to resolve Karabakh issue thru this [Turkey's] approach."

Cengiz Candar wrote in liberal-intellectual Radikal: "PM Erdogan conducted a show in Baku which pleased Azeris very much but at the same time put Turkish diplomacy in the Caucasus in a deadlock. After the Baku show, Turkish diplomacy in the region has taken hostage by Aliyev. PM Erdogan was also wrong to attach the Nagorno Karabakh issue with border opening."

Sami Kohen wrote in mainstream Milliyet: "Following PM Erdogan's

trip to Baku, Turkey has placed itself in the Caucasus where we were before the Turkey-Armenia road map. Erdogan clearly emphasized the direct link between Nagorno Karabakh issue with any progress on the Turkish-Armenia normalization. At this point, it will be unrealistic to expect anything concrete from that process or see any normalization."

Erdal Safak wrote in mainstream Sabah: "PM Erdogan's Baku trip really served its purpose by boosting Turkish-Azeri ties and eliminating worries related to Nagorno Karabakh regarding the road map with Armenia. It was important for Erdogan to reinstate the one nation-two states motto. With this morale boosting, PM Erdogan will soon to travel Iran, and we may even see some surprising developments regarding the Nabucco project with Iranian involvement in the long run."

Charges of Police Brutality Emerge After Crackdown on Demonstrations Against Demolition in Istanbul Neighborhood
Media outlets report violent clashes erupted yesterday between residents and police during the demolition of illegally constructed shanty-houses (Gecekondur) in Istanbul's Basaksehir district, with hundreds of angry home owners throwing rocks at police and municipality teams, trying to prevent the demolition. Protestors made barricades out of wooden market tables, pavement and car tires and set fire to them. The police responded with pepper gas and high-pressure water cannons. The police reportedly fired a tear gas canister into the garden of an elementary school building, hurting 61 children and several women, including a four-month-old baby. Mainstream Haberturk says yesterday's riots resembled "the resistance in Palestine." Mainstream Milliyet says the authorities

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"turned a blind eye to the construction of illegal buildings as an election bribe prior to the municipal elections held in March." Even residents said they had "bribed" municipality officials prior to the elections in order to construct the buildings. Papers and television news broadcasts strongly criticize the police brutality and the "disproportionate use of force" during the incident. CNN Turk played one video repeatedly of an apparent bystander who was slapped in the face and kicked by police.

In a press conference following the riots, Istanbul Governor Muammer Guler held the demonstrators responsible for the tear gas canister fired into the school building, saying "militants" in the crowd took the canister and threw it into the school garden.

Erdogan Criticizes Sarkozy and Merkel: Turkey Should be Treated the Same As Other EU Members
Media outlets report in a joint press conference held Thursday with Polish PM Donald Tusk in Warsaw, visiting Turkish PM Erdogan lashed out at German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Nicolas Sarkozy for their statements earlier this week against Turkey's full EU membership. Erdogan said the two leaders were "using" Turkey's EU entry bid to win voters' support prior to the elections for the European Parliament. "I have already discussed these issues both with Sarkozy and Merkel. I believe politicians need to stick to commitments made in bilateral meetings," said Erdogan. He noted Turkey should be subjected to the same accession criteria applied for the other members of the EU bloc. Erdogan stressed Turkey was working to meet the EU accession criteria, and was not expecting the EU to admit Turkey before Ankara meets its obligations. Also, Erdogan accused Sarkozy and Merkel of "not being elegant" in their statements and of "changing the rules of the game in the middle of the match."

Meanwhile, Turkey's influential business grouping TUSIAD released a statement in response to Merkel and Sarkozy, saying that "privileged partnership" was "not an option for Turkey" in Ankara's drive for full membership.

FM Davutoglu Declares Turkey Seeks Full EU Membership or Nothing
Milliyet, Sabah, Zaman, Radikal: Liberal Radikal reports that in a press conference in Stockholm after the meeting with EU Commissioner Olli Rehn, Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu warned EU members not to use Turkey's EU entry bid for their domestic political goals and said "EU membership is strategic priority for Turkey. We have only

one goal in the negotiations, full EU membership. We will either join the EU as full member or will not join the EU at all." Mainstream Sabah reports that Olli Rehn on his part said "we had a constructive meeting. The European Commission supports Turkey's full EU membership. We expressed our support especially on the diplomatic contacts Turkey recently made with Armenia."

Obama Censors Bush's Torture (Haberturk)

Media continue to report on Obama's refusal to release photos of U.S. forces' mistreatment of detainees in U.S. custody in Iraq and Afghanistan. Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak headlines, "Obama Brings Censorship to Torture," and reports, "The Defense Department said it would share the photos with the public at the end of May," but, "President Obama has blocked the release of the photos." Mainstream Sabah reports, "Censorship Comes from Obama Towards the Torture Photos," and notes, "Obama said he would publish the photos," but "after he saw them he changed his mind because of his concern about anti-American sentiments" that could result with release of the photos. Mainstream Milliyet reports, "Obama Blocks Investigation Photos," and notes, "Obama has made a 180-degree turn on his promise in April to release close to 2000 photos documenting U.S. forces' mistreatment of detainees in Iraq and Afghanistan."

In a related story, far right Ortadogu reports in "Obama Is Evaluating The Probability of Holding Terrorism Suspects in the U.S." that "U.S. President Obama is considering transferring some

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Guantanamo detainees to the U.S. for trial."

Obama to Israel: Don't Surprise Us (CNN Turk)

Media note that President Obama warned Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu against conducting a surprise strike against Iran. Mainstream CNN Turk headlines, "Obama Tells Israel: Don't Surprise Us and Strike Iran Without Warning." Mainstream Haberturk headlines, "Don't Surprise Me," and reports, "CIA Director Leon Panetta took a guarantee from Israel during his May 18th visit that Israel would not engage in a surprise attack against Iran," and "Obama was also given a guarantee by Prime Minister Netanyahu that Israel would not launch a surprise attack." Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet reports in "An Iran Promise to the U.S.," that "Israel Will Not Create A Surprise."

Fighting, Controversy, and Intelligence Sharing in Pakistan

Mainstream Sabah reports, "In 19 Days, 834 Thousand People Have Been Displaced," and notes, "The Pakistani government insists the fighting will continue until the end." Mainstream NTV reports, "The Pakistani government continues its offensive against the Taliban," as "hundreds of thousands of civilians flee the fighting," and yet, "the Taliban remains in control of the majority of the territory in which the fighting is taking place." Liberal Radikal reports in "The Pakistani President Calls Out The U.S.," Pakistani President Zardari was interviewed by NBC and criticized the U.S. for not apprehending Osama Bin Laden in Tora Bora when he said, "You lost Tora Bora, not me." In response to U.S. drone attacks in Pakistan he said, "We want our own drones." Meanwhile, CNN Turk headlines, "Intelligence Sharing Between The U.S. and Pakistan," and reports, "Chairman of the Joint Chiefs Mike Mullen has announced that the U.S. will share intelligence with the government of Pakistan. The intelligence in question is gathered from U.S. drone planes that patrol the border between Pakistan and Afghanistan."

TV News (CNN Turk)

Domestic

- Istanbul governor Muammer Guler said no swine flu cases have been detected in Istanbul so far.

- On May 17, the Ataturk Thought Association (ADD) and 130 other NGOs will stage "Republic Rally" in support of secularism in Ankara.

- President Abdullah Gul will travel to Syria on a three-day visit as the official guest of Syrian President Bashar Assad. Gul will be accompanied by Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu, Farming Minister

Mehdi Eker and Culture Minister Ertugrul Gunay.

- The UN's special envoy for Cyprus, Alexander Downer, will visit Ankara on May 18 to meet Foreign Minister Davutoglu.

World

- Germany said it will allow Turkish nationals to visit Germany without visas if they are making "business trips."

- In a blow to the Nabucco project, Kazakhstan signed an agreement for the construction of a natural gas pipeline with the Russian gas giant Gazprom.

- Iran's Defense Ministry has announced plans to manufacture a licensed version of Ukraine's Antonov An-148 mid-range jet airliner.

- The 28th annual Turkish Day Parade will be held in New York on May 23.

JEFFREY